

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE GLAUCOMA DETECTION ACT OF 1999

HON. MARK FOLEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Medicare Glaucoma Detection Act of 1999 today. Although it is not a disease that is always at the forefront of our attention, glaucoma is a significant cause of legal blindness in this country. An estimated 80,000 Americans are blind because of this disease. Alarming, at least two million individuals have glaucoma and estimates show that at least half of them are not aware of it.

Medical science has shown that glaucoma can be prevented or delayed through early diagnosis and treatment. Preliminary data indicates that early detection in many cases can lead to treatment through pharmaceutical intervention rather than through surgery. I see no reason that America's seniors should risk losing their sight, and consequently their independence, from glaucoma if we can effectively identify and treat this disease early. Unfortunately, current Medicare coverage of glaucoma testing is inadequate. Current coverage is only available for those who show clearly identifiable symptoms of the disease. However, for many people, this could be too late.

The Medicare Glaucoma Detection Act will expand coverage of glaucoma testing to include all Medicare patients 65 and older, Medicare-eligible individuals aged 60 to 64 who have a family history of glaucoma and other high risk populations identified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Covered services will include a series of tests which must be performed in combination by an ophthalmologist in order to successfully detect the disease.

Preventive care, like early disease testing, has proven to be highly effective in reducing the seriousness of many diseases and in improving the recovery time and quality of life for those who suffer from them. It only makes sense that coverage of glaucoma testing should be expanded in light of the known value of preventive care. Therefore, I would encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

RECOGNITION OF S. 76, THE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS BILL AS INTRODUCED BY STATE SENATOR FRANK W. BALANCE, JR., RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, as a strong proponent of equal employment and protec-

tions under the law, I rise today to call the attention of the Congress to North Carolina Senate Bill (SB) 76, "Traffic Enforcement Statistics" legislation introduced by North Carolina State Senator and Deputy President Pro Tempore Frank W. Balance, Jr. Governor James B. Hunt of North Carolina signed SB 76 into law on April 22, 1999.

SB 76 will greatly assist in determining whether minorities are treated fairly by highway patrols along North Carolina roads and highways by requiring troopers to record the race, age and sex of every driver stopped as well as to cite the reason for particular stops. The collected data will be presented by the Attorney General's Office in a biennial report to the General Assembly. As the chief sponsor of the bill, Senator Balance argued that "there should not be a crime called 'driving while black.'"

Mr. Speaker, SB 76 can serve as a viable model for other states experiencing similar concerns about equal enforcement of traffic laws as well as for our nation. To provide you with more detailed information regarding this important legislation, I am submitting the text of SB 76 along with an article from the Raleigh News & Observer. I encourage my colleagues to read this article and consider SB 76's applicability for your states and on the federal level.

ELECTRONIC DISCLOSURES DELIVERY ACT OF 1999

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, Today, I join Congresswoman ROUKEMA and Congressman INSLEE in introducing, The Electronic Disclosures Delivery Act of 1999. The legislation addresses the rapidly increasing role of computers and telecommunications technology in the delivery of financial products and services of all kinds. Providing financial services such as mortgages, insurance and securities over the Internet is redefining the banking and investment industries and promises to be an area of explosive growth over the next five years.

The legislation only addresses electronic delivery of information to and from consumers and financial services providers. It does not affect the rights and responsibilities of any party or the content of any disclosure, including both the timing and format of disclosures and the information to be provided. The bill makes it possible for these disclosures to be given to the consumer efficiently and in a more user friendly format than is currently the practice. Over the Internet, consumers will be able to conduct transactions virtually anywhere and at any time, 7-days-a-week, 24-hours-a-day. Internet commerce will increase consumer convenience, through reduced costs and more "one-stop shopping."

Many of the federal laws that regulate mortgage transactions, including the Real Estate

Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA), mandate the delivery of disclosures to consumers. However, in most cases, these laws were adopted to apply to face-to-face or paper transactions, and do not easily accommodate on-line transactions. RESPA is a statute that has not been free from controversy—many would argue that substantive provisions of that law are in need of clarification. However, the legislation that we are introducing today focuses only on the electronic delivery of disclosures. I believe that the on-line delivery of disclosures deserves review apart from the overall RESPA reform.

Let me give you a sense of the impact of the Internet on the financial services industry:

International Data Corporation forecasts that total worldwide commerce on the Internet will grow from an estimated \$32.4 billion in 1997 to an estimated \$425.7 billion in 2002.

According to Jupiter Communications, the number of on-line banking households in the United States is projected to grow from an estimated 4.5 million in 1997 to an estimated 17.1 million in 2002. Jupiter Communications further indicates that the percentage of these on-line banking households utilizing Internet banking is projected to rise from an estimated 8 percent in 1996 to an estimated 80 percent in 2000.

A recent Forrester Research, Inc. report indicates that by the year 2003, nearly \$100 billion or 10 percent of the mortgage market will be generated online, while other reports project the market share for Internet originations to be as high as 30 percent by the year 2005.

The Forrester study also indicated that in the view of the financial services industry one of the principal impediments to progress in the offering of mortgages over the Internet is outdated laws and regulations.

The Congress and the regulators must play a leadership role in updating many of the consumer protection laws to reflect new technologies and establish a coherent legislative framework to deliver financial services and products through electronic commerce. As chairman of the Housing Subcommittee I look forward to working with Congresswoman ROUKEMA and Congressman INSLEE to promote these legislative changes that will enhance consumer access to financial products while maintaining appropriate consumer protections.

THE NAVY AND VIEQUES

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in April, U.S. F-18 fighter jets accidentally dropped two 500-pound bombs on an observation post nearly a mile from their target on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, killing a civilian and wounding four others. Although Vieques has housed a naval live-fire training facility for over 50 years, there are 9,300 civilians who live on the island.

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